

# Construction unions have been training green for decades

SALEM — Green jobs are all the rage now, but construction unions have been training members to work green for decades.

That's the message a dozen union locals delivered to Oregon lawmakers June 2 with displays set up in the gallery of the state Capitol.

"We don't need training grants to teach new workers in green industries; we have people fully-trained and ready to go to work. We just need the jobs," said John Mohlis, executive secretary of the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council.

Construction unions and their signatory contractors operate state-of-the-art facilities that train apprentices and journey-level workers in retrofitting buildings, installing solar panels, practicing energy- and water-saving technologies, clearing asbestos and mold, and more. And they do it on their own dime, without any taxpayer dollars.

Stan Danielson, business manager of Heat & Frost Insulators Local 36, said insulators have been green since 1913.

"We're greener than trees," he said, pointing to a chart showing carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions reduced by 2,308 pounds a year when wrapping a foot of 3-inch diameter steam pipe running at 350-degrees Fahrenheit with 2-inch-thick insulation. A tree, on the other hand, cuts only 50 pounds of carbon emissions a year, while a compact fluorescent light bulb reduces CO2

emissions by 130 pounds annually.

Clint Mapes, director of the Oregon and SW Washington Roofers & Waterproofers training program, said his trade has been installing green roofs (vegetation) since the 1970s. "You still have to put down a solid base. It's UV (ultraviolet rays) that kills a roof," he said. "You can get more years with a plant roof."

The Laborers Union also was there promoting its "Weatherize for Good" program with The High Road Contractors & Community Alliance. The program offers homeowners low-interest loans through Clean Energy Works Oregon to make home energy improvements. In addition, the program pairs homeowners with pre-qualified contractors that are committed to creating quality jobs and investing in local community organizations. For more information, call 503-893-9240.

One bill that construction trades officials are eager to see come to fruition this legislative session is HB 2960. The "Cool Schools" Initiative directs the State Department of Energy to establish a program to provide grants and loans to support energy efficiency or clean energy projects, including projects to weatherize, upgrade or retrofit public schools. Studies show that for every \$1 million invested in energy efficiency upgrades, as many as 15 family-wage jobs are created.

Mohlis said the legislation will put

people back to work in every corner of the state, free up dollars for classrooms that would otherwise be spent on en-

ergy bills, all the while lowering the state's carbon footprint and reducing the overall impact on the environment.

HB 2960 passed unanimously in the House June 13. At press time, it was still awaiting action in the Senate.



Ron Copenhagen, an instructor at the UA Local 290 Training Center, tries his hand at a virtual spray painting simulator as Harry Kalin, an instructor at the Western Oregon/SW Washington Regional Training Center of Painters, Drywall Finishers and Allied Trades, looks on. The computerized program helps train painters to spray paint more efficiently and in a more environmentally-friendly manner by completely eliminating paint wastage and chemical toxins. Marci Wichman, assistant training coordinator at Local 290, is sitting in the background.

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JUNE 25th: Labor activists call for a unified strategy meeting as a response to the escalating attacks on workers in Oregon and across the nation. We need a strategy that UNITES all working people. Guest Speaker: Ed Henderson, ILWU Local 10, which showed courageous solidarity with Wisconsin workers on April 4th by its demonstration at the SF ports!

**SATURDAY, JUNE 25TH**  
REGISTRATION 9:30 AM PROGRAM 10 AM  
IBEW LOCAL 48 HALL  
15937 NE AIRPORT WAY, PORTLAND  
LUNCH PROVIDED - PLEASE RSVP BY  
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